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Proposed City Legislation Addresses Solid Waste Disposal

HONOLULU, HI – In an effort to address Honolulu's growing solid waste disposal problem, Public Works Committee Chair Rod Tam introduced legislation relating to solid waste disposal.

"This legislation was introduced as a means to generate discussion regarding the issue of solid waste disposal," said Councilmember Rod Tam. "It is an issue that concerns all residents, so we would like to discuss these ideas in public so the Council can gather feedback from constituents."

Resolution 05-156 urges the city administration to consider alternative or high technology methods of disposing of the city's solid waste when determining whether to replace, reconstruct, expand or supplement the HPower facility. The HPower facility reduces the volume of solid waste that must be disposed of at the city's landfill; however, it cannot dispose of all solid waste produced on the island and still produces ash which must be sent to the landfill. The resolution urges the city administration to look at new waste disposal technologies, such as the plasma arc technology which could possibly dispose of solid waste without creating the amount of ash now produced at the HPower facility.

Bill 37 mandates that beginning July 1, 2008, the disposal into the Waimanalo Gulch landfill include only the following: 1) ash, slag, or other residue produced by combustion, gasification,

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Page 2

or vitrification of refuse and other solid waste and 2) empty propane tanks if designated for disposal into the landfill by the Director of the Department of Environmental Services (DES). Bill 37 also prohibits the Director of DES from designating as part of the city disposal system a city-controlled or -contracted landfill other than the Waimanalo Gulch landfill.

Bill 38 would establish a real property tax surcharge during any tax year following a calendar year in which the amended recycling goal set forth by Section 9-1.1(b), Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 1990, was not reached. The goals are as follows: For each of the calendar years 2007 – 2009 at least 30 percent; for each of the calendar years 2010 – 2012, at least 40 percent; and for each calendar year thereafter, at least 50 percent of the solid waste generated within the city shall be recycled, reused, composted or otherwise diverted from incineration or placement in a landfill. The surcharge shall not be imposed on a parcel in a tax year if: 1) The Director of DES finds that the recycling goal for the immediate preceding calendar year was reached; or 2) An ordinance is enacted before the commencement of the tax year to waive the surcharge for that tax year, notwithstanding a finding by the director of DES that the recycling goal for the immediate preceding calendar year was not reached.

Bill 39 allows a person operating a state-permitted solid waste shipping facility to ship solid waste out-of-state, without the necessity of obtaining the approval of the director of DES.

Last week Council Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz introduced **Bill 33** which creates a mandatory recycling program for multi-unit residential buildings within the city that are served by private refuse collectors.

"I commend Public Works Committee Chair Tam for leading the way on this issue," said Council Chair Dela Cruz. "Considering what we learned during the landfill selection process last year, we need to work toward short-term and long-term solutions and alternatives."

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